

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0841

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, NU

SUBJECT: PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS EXPOUND POLITICAL ACTION PLAN

1. AMBASSADOR, DCM, AND POLOFF MET AT THE RESIDENCE ON SATURDAY, FEB 18 WITH THREE PRIVATE SECTOR SPOKESMEN: ALFONSO ROBELO, PRESIDENT OF OF THE NICARAGUAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (INDE) AND A KEY FIGURE IN THE RECENT NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE MOVEMENT, ALFONSO CALLEJAS DESHON, A FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OF NICARAGUA, AND WILLIAM BAEZ, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NICARAGUAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION(FUNDE). ROBELO SAID THAT THEY WERE SEEKING A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION TO THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL CRISIS, BUT THAT NO POLITICAL LEADER CAN ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA NOW WITHOUT DESTROYING HIS CREDIBILITY. HE EXPLAINED THAT NO ONE HAS ANY FAITH IN ANY PROMISES SOMOZA MIGHT MAKE BECAUSE SOMOZA HAS BROKEN POLITICAL PACTS THAT HE HAS ENTERED IN THE PAST. HE DOUBTED SOMOZA'S SINCERITY AT THIS TIME, SAYING THAT SOMOZA IS TRYING TO GAIN TIME, SPECULATING ON THE DEFEAT OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN 1980 AND THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT WHO WOULD BE MORE FRIENDLY TO THE SOMOZAS. ACCORDING TO ROBELO, BEFORE THERE IS A DIALOGUE THERE MUST BE A "MONOLOGUE"; THAT IS, SOMOZA MUST MAKE UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS TO RESTORE THE CREDIBILITY OF A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION. IN PARTICULAR, HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR AN HONEST INVESTIGATION OF PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO'S ASSASSINATION.

2. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY CONSIDER THAT CONDITIONS ARE NOT AP-
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PROPRIATE FOR A DIALOGUE, THEY NEVERTHELESS DESIRE A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS. CALLEJAS, WHO IS STILL A MEMBER OF THE RULING LIBERAL PARTY (PLN), UNFOLDED THE FOLLOWING PLAN: ORGANIZING A GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT WITHIN THE LIBERAL PARTY CALLED THE DEMOCRATIC LIBERAL MOVEMENT (MLD) TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOMOZA-CONTROLLED PARTY. WHILE EXPECTING TO BE EXPELLED FROM THE PLN THEY HOPE TO MUSTER ENOUGH STRENGTH TO FORCE SOMOZA TO SELECT A GOOD OFFICIAL

PLN CANDIDATE FOR THE 1980 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, I.E. A CANDIDATE WHO IS RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT OF THE PRESIDENT. THEIR SECOND GOAL IS TO PRESENT AN UNOFFICIAL CANDIDATE WHO WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO SOMOZA (POSSIBLY CALLEJAS HIMSELF), THUS INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF A FREE ELECTION. THEIR THIRD GOAL IS TO DEFUSE THE CURRENT PROPENSITY TOWARD VIOLENCE BY PROVIDING THE POSSIBILITY OF A NON-VOLUNT SOLUTION.

THEIR POSITION WOULD BE PLURALISTIC POSITION IN THAT WHILE NOT OPENLY CRITICIZING THE SANDINISTAS THEY WOULD BE OPENING AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE. THE CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS SOLUTION WOULD BE A THOROUGH ELECTORAL REFORM AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, MEANING THAT THE PRESIDENT ELECTED IN 1980 AND NOT SOMOZA SHOULD NAME THE HEAD OF THE GUARD.

3. THE PRIVATE SECTOR SPOKESMEN MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHETHER AN ELECTORAL SOLUTION WOULD BE FEASIBLE AT ALL WOULD LARGELY DEPEND ON TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL CONCESSIONS FROM SOMOZA. ROBELO POINTED OUT THAT APART FROM THE ABSENCE OF REPRISALS AGAINST BUSINESSES WHICH HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE WORK STOPPAGE THERE HAD BEEN NO CONCESSIONS, AND WARNED THAT IF TOO MUCH TIME ELAPSED THE SITUATION MIGHT GET OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE MODERATE ELEMENTS, MAKING A MODERATE AND NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION UNLIKELY.
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